

ICES CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

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REPORT OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (CONC)

14, 16–18 MARCH 2006

ICES HEADQUARTERS, COPENHAGEN



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Conseil International pour l'Exploration de la Mer

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1 Opening and practical arrangements

The Chair of ConC opened the meeting at 15.00 and extended a special welcome to the new members of ConC, Ian Bricknell (MCC) and Martin Pastoors (ACFM).

ConC was informed that the Chairs of DFC and RMC would attend the meeting from Thursday and Saturday, respectively. The Chairs of MCAP and MCC had informed the Chair that they would be leaving on Friday 17 March. The meeting was attended by the General Secretary and the President on 14 and 16 March. The list of participants is included as Annex 1.

After a welcome address by the ICES General Secretary a 'tour de table' introduction of all participants was conducted.

2 Adoption of agenda and timetable (Doc 1)

The Agenda was adopted without any comments. The Chair had received additional agenda items which had been placed under "Any other business". During the meeting another new item "Training in ICES" was added to these.

3 Minutes of 2005 September meeting in Aberdeen (Doc 2)

The Chair listed the points that had been agreed at the ConC September 2005 meeting to be readdressed during this meeting:

- Preparation of draft resolutions for three proposed symposia:
 - ICES/PICES Symposium on Marine Mortality for Salmon (DFC) scheduled for 2008 or 2009;
 - Symposium on the Ecosystem Approach (MCC);
 - The International Polar Year Symposium (OCC/Secretariat).
- Guidelines for ASC registration fee.
- Invited speakers for ASC 2007.
- Follow-up on last year's ConC discussion on time spent on reporting from Science Committees. The Chair had noted the clear feedback he had received from the ConC members, that this is the only chance for chairs to exchange information.
- The ten review points.
- The ICES position paper.

The minutes were approved without comments.

4 Workshop on Review of the ICES Committee and Expert Group Performance [WKREP]

4.1 Preparations for the Open Day (Docs 3, 4, and 5)

The WKREP open day meeting had been scheduled for 15 March. Three meeting documents had been made available to the WKREP participants prior to the meeting. In addition to these documents, ConC members had received additional background documents and points of views from Committee Chairs – a paper from the UK laboratories, and two more internal background documents had been distributed from RMC and DFC.

The UK document was discussed. It suggests that the system is broken and that a major change is needed. The proposal is for fewer, more proactive and influential Science

Committees. PICES, which is a smaller organisation than ICES, established itself with three or four committees. What would ICES lose or win by establishing such a system? A reduced number of Science Committees would imply a change in the way ICES is characterised in the Strategic Plan.

The discussion then focused on how to structure the workshop. The following points were raised as important issues:

Interface between science and advice

- At its last meeting in Aberdeen, ConC identified communication as a problem in the present structure. How can we ensure that communication is improved and how do we ensure that everyone knows what is going on? Emphasis should be placed on communication and planning of EGs. It is frustrating that advice is not aware of the work being done on the science side.
- What is our business and who are our customers? These are questions that need to be answered. We have the Strategic Plan, but is there a need to have a body that identifies key scientific questions to address?
- Need for product development between science and advice side.

Science Committees

- They have remits but no objectives.
- Do we have the right committees? Single-regional committees or not? BCC works fine and is a highly productive group. No reason to question the committee because it is regional. Why not have regional committees instead of the other way around.
- Should we change to a more flexible *ad hoc* structure; do we need more or fewer committees, with perhaps more interesting tasks? Would a three-committee structure narrow our focus and our topics too much?
- Is the size of committees important? As an example, FTC is a small, well functioning committee.

Expert Groups

- Important to identify the things that are actually working. The good results are hidden in huge reports, only a few of us discover these highlights. How do we communicate the good results – the final products of ICES – should it go through the science committees?
- How do we improve communication between EGs? The AMAWCG meeting structure is a very good initiative and a forum for discussing the contents of the work. Is the same type of forum needed for ACE and ACME and the Science Committees?
- It has to be fun, otherwise it will affect the attendance. The *raison d'être* for groups is for scientists to meet and discuss science. Their primary objective is not to serve the ICES advisory system. We have to be careful when we criticize groups and suggest closing them down.
- Self-generated groups are difficult to administer, but if they are well functioning, why dissolve them? Most of these groups are bottom-up. If a top-down structure is imposed to a well functioning “self generated” EG, it risks losing its members, as ICES is based on voluntary activities.
- ICES is and should also be a forum for “immature” science, where scientists can try out scientific ideas that do not necessarily hold.

Conclusions

- Gentle solutions rather than radical solutions.
- “Don’t change what is already functioning satisfactorily”.
- Communication needs to be improved.

In preparation for the meeting ConC outlined the key points/"trigger questions" on which to focus the discussion (included as Annex 2) in the three subgroups.

Three subgroups were established with a good mix of ConC members, ICES Delegates, EG chairs, and ICES staff in all three groups. The groups were chaired by Chris Zimmermann, Einar Svendsen, and Fritz Köster.

4.2 Conclude the Open Day discussions and make recommendations as appropriate

ConC discussed the overall impressions from the Open Day. Although the three WKREP breakout groups had been constructive, not many new ideas had come out of the meeting. One group had signalled that only fine-tuning of today's structure is needed.

ConC agreed to establish a subgroup (Restructuring Group – RG) tasked with formulating some recommendations for a future structure based on the conclusions reached by ConC in light of the WKREP meeting:

- a) draft a proposal for short-term revisions to the existing system;
- b) draft two or three scenarios for the long-term changes and evaluate the pros and cons, and in light of these scenarios:
 - Discuss the science committee structure and suggest how science is best organised in ICES;
 - Develop a first set of objectives for the new "committee" structure;
 - Suggest how to improve communication within the ICES system;
 - Prepare guidelines for communication between science and advice.

The subgroup members (Dave Reid (Chair of RG); Head of Science Programme (Secretary); Simon Jennings (Chair of ACE); Nils Hammer (Chair of BCC); Pierre Pepin (Chair of PUB); and Martin Pastoors (Chair of ACFM)) will meet by correspondence/virtually.

The first draft of the report should be ready by the end of May in order to allow time for ConC to review and comment on it before 10 June, by which date the document should be submitted to the Bureau as a meeting document. Subsequently the report will be distributed to all Science and Advisory committees, Expert Group chairs and members. The issue should be discussed during the ASC in Maastricht and final recommendations be brought before the Delegates for their meeting in October 2006.

The discussion based on WKREP raised several points without a clear conclusion:

Do we have a shared understanding of the problems? If not, we will come up with different solutions. ConC agreed to the following list of problems that need to be tackled:

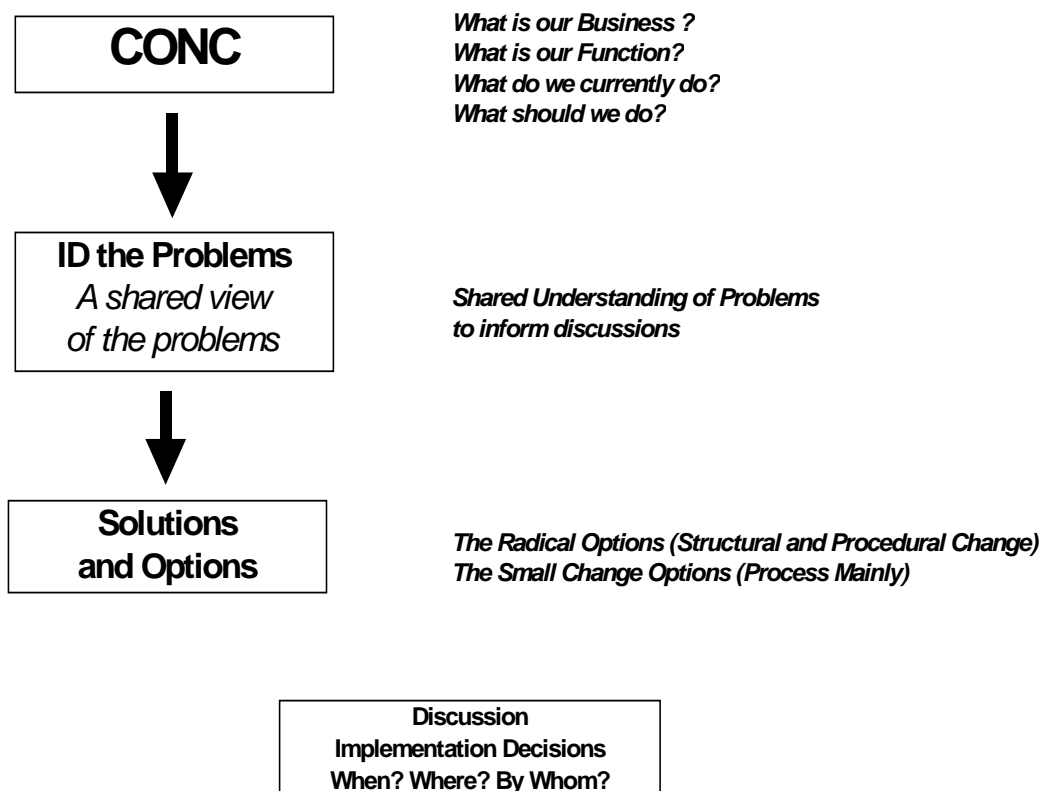
- Enhancing communication up and down as well as cross discipline;
- Lack of flexibility;
- Weak process for prioritisation of work;
- Duplication of work;
- Variable alignment of science with national priorities/funding;
- Patchy performance across EGs and Science Committees;
- Patchy feed of science into the advisory process;
- Weak process for identifying the most important science issues;
- Adoption of science by the advisory process.

Flexibility. Could be resolved by a defined lifespan for Expert Groups in order to be more dynamic as science priorities change. However, a large change is not necessarily needed to allow for that. Is there really a lack of flexibility in the organisation? ICES does not change its

objectives as fast as the national laboratories. Though ICES needs to maintain or at least safeguard the long-term vision it has provided, maybe a cultural change is called for within ICES to allow for a higher degree of flexibility. Flexibility – perhaps this is not a structural problem, but rather an overload problem. We may not need to change the structure to enhance the flexibility.

Integration or fragmentation. The ACFM advisory process is handicapped by the large number of stocks it must deal with in a single meeting. This makes it difficult to address each stock effectively, and impossible to integrate ecosystem and fishing industry considerations. How can we achieve better integration? Reduce the number of groups. Think of flexible units, such as workshops designed to provide answers to small targeted problems.

Objective - A document that Synthesises - Summarises the Raw Material



A simplified sketch of a possible way forward as outlined by the Chair of MCAP.

Four essential needs/functionalities that ConC needs to perform were identified:

- Manage the EG process
- ASC Conference
- Science Strategies
- Communication

How do we best achieve these functional areas?

ConC. ConC is doing too much micro-managing. There should be more emphasis on leadership. ConC does not delegate enough work to the committees. ConC could play a more active role in the integration of science and advice and be more active in defining scientific

challenges within ICES. Communicating the science is another weak point that ConC should focus on.

In the present system ConC has no real power in that it simply passes on the recommendations to the Council. We need to break that pattern. It became apparent that it was necessary to give more power to MCAP. Similarly, ConC should be the highest science level in the organisation, playing the same role in science as MCAP does in advice.

It was agreed that organising the ASC should still be part of ConC's remit.

Proposed change of scope for SciComs

The question was raised whether to have Science Committee meetings separate from the ASC, and another timely question was put forward "Had people been aware of the committee meetings, would they have attended them"?

There was broad agreement in WKREP to change the membership structure of the Science Committees, ensuring that all EG chairs attend.

Different characteristics apply for Theme Sessions and Committee meetings at ASC. We need to convey the information that there is science also in the Science Committee meetings.

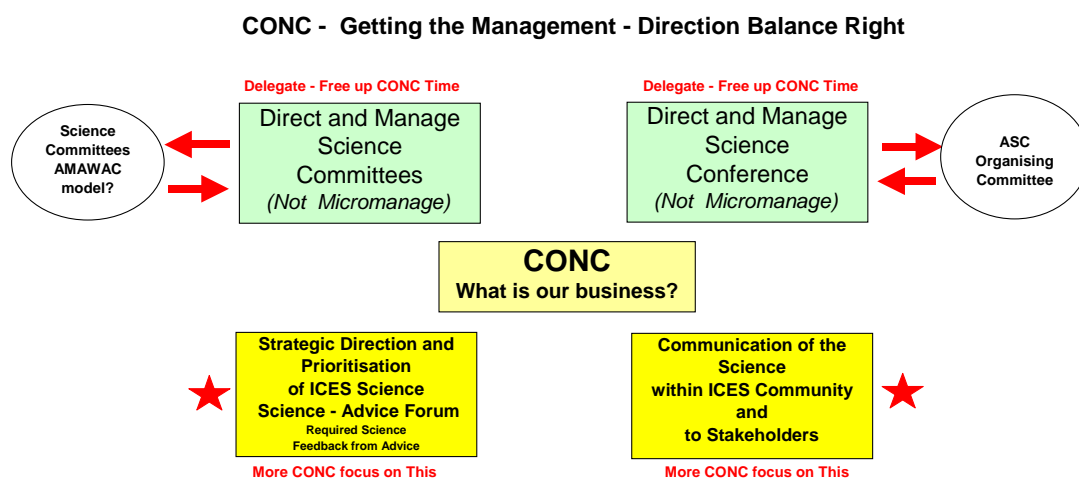
Producer-driven science does not mean bad science, but we are not guiding it in a direction that is beneficial for advice. We need some strategic thinking from the advisory groups on what science they need in the future. The Science Committees should be the contact points for such a discussion. Strategic discussions on advice-related science should take place in the ConC meeting, but then more time is needed.

Concluding remarks

ConC did not reach agreement on whether to introduce revisions to the existing system or to have a radical change: Is change possible without having quite an extensive scenario/enforcing function? Can the objective be reached by making small revisions to the existing system? Small changes can be substantial in terms of more power to some groups. These questions remained open and will be addressed by the Restructuring Group.

ICES is a goodwill organisation. If we are not fully aware of the drivers we will be in a very weak situation. We should be careful not to lose contact with the Delegates. The key is to identify the problem and the best way of solving it, and not simply making structural changes in the hope that this will solve the problem.

A possible way forward was illustrated by the Chair of MCAP:



5 **Coordination of pure and applied science in ICES, to identify tactical and strategic priorities for Science and Advisory Committees (Doc 6)**

This agenda item is strongly linked to the discussions and follow-up activities of WKREP. Dave Reid introduced Doc 6 on this subject. The many different categories (in terms of science activity/area) of Expert Groups do not always reflect their role in the system. For example there are many Expert Groups entitled “WG on xxxxx Ecology”), but these do not always work in the same way. Positioning of groups in committees, etc. is often a historical mistake, the information about which may have been lost. The overall picture can be perceived by an outsider as chaotic, often lacking clear links between producer and user of information, where no clear ideas seem to exist of where and how output could/should be used. However, that is case specific and there are areas where the flow of information is directed and controlled. To an outsider it might look like an integrated planned process, but it is actually an organic evolution.

Some Expert Groups may wonder how they fit into the system. For instance, WGZE is an excellent group, doing world class science and producing very good reports. But who uses their work and for what purpose? Communication between groups can be improved by more appropriate and simple justification texts in the ToRs. These should specify the goals and remits of groups, explicitly stating their links with other EGs and what this entails. Where such links exist it is critical that there be personal interaction between the cooperating groups. It is difficult to replace human contact by Sharepoint or telephones, and attendance of the chair of one group at the meeting of another should be the norm. All groups in all committees should be requested to report who they link with at present, and who they think it would be relevant to link with. Such a process could lead to new committees or to a matrix structure of committees and “interdisciplinary” tasks.

This process must be seen in relation to the overall restructuring of ICES. It would help in identifying overlaps, i.e. duplication but also synergies.

ConC recognises that new Expert Groups may be proposed when a small group of scientists have identified a key science issue and asked to establish a group to address this – SGRECVAP is a good example, where the proposing group included a fishers’ federation. This work is independent of the top-down approach of requests to the advisory side and consequent request for scientific input. It would help a great deal if Advisory Committees made the requests more transparent and explained them well to the science side.

Strategic priorities for ICES science are outlined in the Strategic Plan and the Action Plan. We are awaiting a database as a tool to get an overview of compliance of the Expert Groups with these plans. However, we should be aware that these plans were drafted by a broad and involved group of people whose many interests tended to be reflected in the Action Plan, which is perhaps too comprehensive as a result. This should be considered when revamping the Strategic Plan.

Conclusion: This discussion should be included in the work of the Restructuring Group. It is essential to discriminate between performance issues and structural problems in the existing system before a new one is designed and proposed. To carry out major structural change without a clear idea of how this will improve matters is not the way to address problems.

6 **Highlighting recent trends and variability in the state of our ecosystem (Doc 7)**

Einar Svendsen presented Doc 7. This is a follow-up action of the ASC 2005 meeting where a *summary of phenomena, anomalies or other ecosystem events that came up during meetings of*

Expert Groups was suggested. The suggested procedure would be to ask participants to identify one or two highlights to be reported in the Executive Summary of the report. Subsequently, the Committee chairs collate the highlights and include them in their Committee Report.

An important key point is to include not only the positive events or those where groups have worked well and efficiently. Highlights should cover all cases, the “good, the bad, and the ugly” to make sure that also cases where scientific evidence was insufficient and needs improvement and cases where things go the wrong way are covered.

Even though the focus of the highlights summary is on internal communication, some of these highlights may be communicated to the public. As is already practice, such information is publicised in the ICES Newsletter, where appropriate.

6.1 Extracting highlights from Expert Group reports

The request for Chairs to include highlights in their Executive Summaries had been communicated by the Secretariat; however, a reminder will be sent since not all Chairs have complied with this or still send too long summaries. Furthermore, Chairs should be encouraged to elaborate the highlights to make them more explanatory.

The follow-up communication to Expert Group Chairs will include Doc 7 as a specification. The necessary revisions to the document will be made by the Secretariat.

Action: ConC agreed to adopt Doc 7. The new rules will be distributed to EG Chairs and Theme Session conveners.

6.2 Publicising highlights from the ASC Theme Sessions

There had been a parallel request from the Swedish Delegates to publicise main findings from Theme Sessions in layman’s language. At the 2005 ASC we already had a very valuable press release about Theme Sessions. However, science presented at Theme Sessions is not necessarily ICES science and may come from outside, e.g. from EU-funded projects. Under this agenda item related matters were brought up such as a more active media relationship for ICES. We are well known in the scientific community, but not very well known outside our own community. The ICES Information Officer does an excellent job in translating scientific language into layman’s language and he decides, on a case-to-case basis which topics to post on the website and which to communicate to the media during the ASC.

ConC also identified this item as related to the conclusions to be made by the Restructuring Group.

Action: Theme Session conveners will be requested by the Secretariat to similarly submit highlights from their Theme Sessions to the respective Committee Chairs. This will be a good way of reducing the risk that information falls through the cracks.

7 Preparation of guidelines for choice of venues for ICES Expert Group meetings (Doc 8)

During the Council meeting in Copenhagen in October 2005, the question of allowing Expert Group meetings to be held in laboratories of non-ICES member countries arose. ConC had been asked by the Council to prepare a set of guidelines, which were presented by the Chair of FTC in Doc 8.

The following key points were raised in discussion:

- There was agreement that a big organisation like ICES needs specific guidelines.
- Science should be the main justification for the choice of venue. ConC acknowledged that cost implications play an important role, but it was also felt that there could be cases where scientific opportunities outweigh additional travel costs. In these cases it will be necessary to trade off advantages to disadvantages. We have to make good judgements in order to avoid criticism / bad publicity. Most institutes trust their scientists to choose important meetings, irrespective of the venues.
- The ICES Strategic Plan does not state that meetings should be held in ICES Member Countries. From a regional perspective, ICES activities are focused on the North Atlantic, but there are no limitations for other activities. All observer countries, except for Greece, work in ecosystems that are rather similar to the ones ICES works in, e.g. coldwater influenced by polar systems. Reference was made to Goal 5 in the Strategic Plan specifying ICES role to include “issues of regional and potential global interest”.

The guidelines were revised to reflect the discussion and ConC agreed to recommend the following set of guidelines:

**Proposed guidelines for choice of meeting venue
for ICES Expert Groups**

- 1) If the ToRs of the group explicitly limit its activities to the ICES area, e.g. the North Atlantic, meetings should normally be held inside the area.

The first guideline implies that an EG should only consider meetings outside the ICES area if its remit can genuinely be interpreted in a wider context. The following guidelines should be applied when such an invitation is received and where the EG remit has a wider context. A case should be made based on the following:

- 2) The host country should normally be linked to ICES (member state, observer, or co-sponsor of the EG).
- 3) The host institute should include scientists who are already members of the EG.
- 4) The inviting country should benefit from hosting the meeting.
- 5) ICES in general and the EG in particular should benefit from the expertise and knowledge of the host country or region. Specifically where the response to the EG ToRs can be enhanced by the proposed hosts.
- 6) The EG should not have recently held a meeting outside ICES (e.g. in the last 3 years).
- 7) The EG should evaluate the cost implications of the venue choice. This should consider what additional cost that would be incurred by the usual attendees, and particularly ICES members. It should also evaluate whether the choice would limit attendance by these members.

Ideally when an EG wishes to meet outside the ICES area, it should satisfy all the above guidelines, or make a case for not doing so. The main case for such a meeting should be scientific and in terms of benefit to ICES, and to the host country. EGs are advised to make such proposals well in advance of the meeting.

8 ConC procedures at the ASC

8.1 Reports from Committees

Under this item, the Chair asked ConC for views on how to report from the committees and how much time should be allocated for this task on the ConC agenda. The Chair reiterated the importance of demonstrating results/anomalies/highlights in ConC to ensure that the relevant linkage to other committees can be made and he suggested combining the review of draft resolutions with the reporting from each of the committee meetings. The presentations of highlights tend to result in a report of everything that happened in the Committee, which is a very time-consuming exercise.

There was overall **agreement** in ConC to increase the effort to focus on highlights only.

8.2 Handling of draft resolutions

The Committee discussed the handling of draft resolutions before, during and after the ASC:

Before the ASC

- The Secretariat suggested making available the draft resolutions on the ICES website under password protection for Committee Chairs and Members as soon as the Expert Group report has come in.
- It is the responsibility of the Secretariat to monitor that there is no duplication of ToRs.
- It is important that new Science Committee Chairs are properly introduced to their tasks with regard to draft resolutions.
- A successful outcome depends on how well Chairs and Science Committee members have done their homework.

During ASC

At the ConC meeting in Aberdeen, ConC agreed to present only the highlights and lowlights; still a whole day was spent on resolutions. This year half-a-day will be allocated for this process and ConC will aim towards dealing with only those draft resolutions regarded as problematic.

In order to comply with the need for better communication between Committee Chairs during the ASC, ConC agreed to schedule a one-hour meeting after the committee meetings on Wednesday 20 September.

The Advisory Committee ToRs were formulated top-down from Commissions and have subsequently been reviewed by the Secretariat and the Science Committee Chairs. The same quality assurance does not take place in the Science Programme. The Chair emphasised the need for close collaboration/interaction between the Secretariat and the Committee Chairs during the ASC. The majority of the Head of Science Programme's time should be allocated to formulating draft resolutions together with Committee Chairs and to identifying overlaps and cross-reference between Expert Group resolutions. If possible, the Committee Chairs should work in close cooperation with their Expert Groups chairs.

After the ASC

With regard to the formality of presenting draft resolutions to the Council after the ASC, ConC would rely on the Council's acceptance before introducing a new procedure. The ICES President agreed to send out the draft resolutions with a message that unless we are notified prior to the meeting, the ToR will be taken as read. This procedure will request Delegates to

raise their questions beforehand and will allow the ConC Chair and Secretariat to be prepared for the Council meeting.

Expert Group reports

It is important that report deadlines are met. If Expert Groups need a longer deadline for finishing their report this should be specified earlier and preferably in the draft resolution. Committee Chairs were asked to inform EG Chairs that they should meet deadlines for reporting.

Action: Committee Chairs are asked to remind Expert Group Chairs that they must meet the stated deadlines for reporting.

Concluding remarks

The Chair of ConC concluded that the discussion had clearly illustrated the importance of this Agenda Item. To meet the request of the majority of the ConC members, more time would be set aside to discuss science and strategy. To this end, it would be necessary to introduce a new ConC procedure, focusing more on anomalies, strategic issues, and highlights and in return reduce the time spent on the draft resolutions.

9 Review of EG reports (ten review points) (Doc 9)

ConC had agreed in September to revisit the ten review points at the 2006 mid-term meeting. The Chair of the Baltic Committee had undertaken a review process and the overall impression was that it had been very difficult to recruit reviewers to perform the reviews. Now is the time to decide whether we will go ahead with this kind of review.

The ten review points are helpful to focus on some critical questions. Instead of reviewing thick reports, we need to concentrate on the highlights. Therefore, the EGs should be asked to address the ten review points in their report and comment on them (max. one page).

Action:

The Chair of ConC will prepare a letter encouraging Expert Group chairs to highlight the main findings of the group, in particular anomalies of any kind. In addition the Expert Group chairs will be encouraged to look into the ten review points. Each Committee Chair will send this letter to the Expert Group chairs.

10 Annual Science Conference 2006 – Maastricht, The Netherlands (Doc 10)

10.1 Meeting arrangements

Görel Kjeldsen, ICES Meeting & Conference Coordinator, presented Doc 10 and gave a virtual guided tour of the conference centre, which is situated in the outskirts of Maastricht. All registered participants will receive travel passes during the five days of the conference. Moreover, ConC was informed of the new procedure which will take effect this year requiring at least one author to be registered to the ASC prior to inclusion of a paper in the ASC programme and on the conference CD.

The opening session of this year's ASC coincides with the opening of the Dutch parliament, and therefore no Dutch ministers will be able to attend. The organisers may want to invite the European Commissioner of Environment, Stavros Dimas.

ConC was informed that there are preliminary plans to have the opening night reception in the Provincial Government Building of Limburg. The organisers are still looking for a suitable venue for the Conference Dinner.

Applicants for travel funds (DKK 50.000) are asked to submit applications by no later than 16 June 2006. Successful applicants will be notified by 7 July 2006.

The draft programme was distributed. ConC recalled that due to this year's early timing of the mid-term ConC meeting, the ConC Chair together with the Head of Science Programme would prepare the ASC programme in May, based on the necessary input from Theme Session conveners. The draft programme will be distributed to ConC for comments. The Committee Chairs will be asked to suggest their preferred time for a second session of their Committee meeting.

ConC also recalled its decision to let go of the term "business meeting". At this year's ASC (and future conferences) there will be an announcement to emphasise that the Science Committee sessions are open to all registered participants.

ConC agreed to schedule an extra meeting on Wednesday 20 September (after the Committee meetings), and therefore decided to move the poster session to Thursday.

ConC requested a higher degree of flexibility with regard to meeting rooms for *ad hoc* meetings. The Secretariat will try to book small meeting rooms for breakout groups (an additional two or three rooms). The Secretariat pointed out that the host country has already signed a contract with the conference centre, and therefore it was uncertain whether it would be possible to meet this request. It was agreed to communicate the request for additional meeting rooms to future ASC organisers/hosts.

The option of having a third plenary speaker with a presentation of FP7 by Pierre Mathy was presented by the Head of Science Programme. ConC agreed to invite Pierre Mathy for Saturday 23 September. The importance of having a good title was pointed out in order to encourage participants to stay on the final day of the conference. The participants tend to leave after lunchtime. ConC discussed the problem of low attendance on the last day of the ASC, but decided to stick to the normal schedule.

Action: Science Committee Chairs were asked to inform the Head of Science Programme by e-mail how many hours they would need for their committee meetings.

Action: The Secretariat will contact the Conference Centre in order to get a confirmation of the maximum number of participants.

Action: Three exhibitors have replied so far. ConC members are encouraged to suggest additional exhibitors. The aim is to have ten exhibitors.

10.2 New guidelines for ASC registration fee (Doc 16)

Increased fee

During their meeting in February 2006, the Bureau had decided that the 2006 conference fee should be the same as last year, i.e. €130. For future conferences, ConC discussed whether to use the extra income to allow Theme Session conveners to invite keynote speakers to their sessions; however, there was some reluctance to pay keynote speakers for attending Theme Sessions. The extra income could also be used to support new scientists to come to the ASC.

For future conferences, starting from 2007, Doc 16 proposed to introduce a spouse's fee of €30, which was accepted by ConC.

As an incentive for their committed work for ICES, ConC was in favour of reducing the fee for Expert Group chairs (€65), but decided to await the outcome of the Restructuring Group report before making a firm recommendation for next year's conference.

10.3 Schedule of Science Committee meetings and Theme Sessions

This agenda item was dealt with under 10.1.

11 Annual Science Conference 2007 – Helsinki, Finland (Doc 10)

11.1 Meeting arrangements (including date and duration of conference)

A preliminary booking has been made for the Marina Conference Center from 18 September until 22 September. The Secretariat will visit Helsinki in June.

In light of the low attendance on the last day of the ASC in Aberdeen, ConC was asked by the Council to investigate the possibility of shortening the ASC by one day, i.e. whether to have a four- or five-day conference. ConC agreed to maintain a five-day duration of the Annual Science Conference. Reducing the science part of the meeting was not perceived as a desired development and furthermore it was noted that the ASC in Helsinki would not be the right place to reduce the ASC to four days.

In the autumn ConC will readdress the issue of avoiding overlap between the Theme Sessions and Science Committee meetings. It was noted that the future of the ASC will also depend on the outcome of the Restructuring Group's report.

11.2 Review of proposed Theme Sessions (Doc 11)

The list of proposed theme sessions was not reviewed in detail at this meeting. The Chair of ConC reminded the Committee Chairs that two main topics were agreed to last year and it was pointed out that several of the proposed Theme Sessions can be classified under the Ecosystem Approach, but that only one is related to the Baltic. All Committee Chairs were encouraged to introduce new Theme Session proposals related to the Baltic.

Two proposals from the Oceanography Committee were withdrawn:

- “Methods and comparisons for plankton field sampling and analysis, particularly use of image acquisition and analysis technology”, and
- Physical Processes Influencing Marine Ecosystems.

One Theme Session proposal on the “Application of Genetic Identification to Management of Salmon Stocks” was transferred to 2008.

The Head of Science Programme distributed a new proposal for a theme session on “Comparative Marine Ecosystem Structure and Function: Descriptors and Characteristics” to be co-sponsored by PICES, NAFO, and GLOBEC.

A revised list of proposed Theme Sessions is attached as Annex 3.

Action: The BCC Chair was asked to contact the BCC Committee Members and Expert Group chairs with a strong request for new theme session proposals of relevance to the Baltic main theme.

Action: The Chair of ConC emphasised that it will be the responsibility of Committee Chairs to ensure the quality of the text related to the proposed Theme Sessions before the next meeting of ConC.

11.3 Invited lectures and other special events

The following proposals were made for invited lecturers at the 2007 Annual Science Conference:

- Serge Garcia on “*Synthesising the evolution of fisheries science – new directions*”. One of the fathers behind the idea of the Ecosystem Approach. ConC was informed that Serge Garcia will retire a few months before the conference and therefore will not be accepting the invitation as a FAO representative, which would also mean that he would have more freedom to send his message. It was suggested to present him with some recognition in light of his retirement, using our Recognition Programme. The Chair of ConC requested that all suggestions for awards should go through the Awards committee.
- Ed Melvin on “*The applications and evaluations of gear-based technical measures in fisheries management, including discard reduction, selective fishing, vulnerable species and habitat impacts*”. It had been proposed that someone from North America would be appropriate to convey the different experiences in this field between N. America and other areas.

The following candidates for an invited lecturer speaking on a Baltic issue were proposed:

- Bengt Ove Jansson (Sweden), a nestor of Baltic ecology research. Founder of ASCOBANS, but has retired.
- Erik Bonsdorff (Finland) works at the Åbo Academi, a Swedish-speaking University in Turku/Åbo – brought forward as one of the most prominent players in Baltic Ecology.
- Hans Dahlin (Sweden) may talk about EuroGOOS and Baltic GOOS?
- Fritz Köster (Denmark) would be willing to give a talk on the Baltic Ecosystem.

ConC **decided** to invite Serge Garcia and Ed Melvin as invited lecturers for the ASC in 2007.

Action: Chair of MHC and Head of Science Programme were asked to make firm proposals for invited lecturers on Baltic issues well in advance of the ASC 2006.

12 Annual Science Conference 2008 (Doc 10)

The Secretariat informed the Committee that Canada has offered to host the ASC in 2008. The offer is firm, and the Secretariat has been informed that an invitation in written form is in the pipeline. Germany has also been investigating the possibility of hosting the ASC in 2008, but the Chair of BCC will ask his ministry to investigate the possibility for 2009 instead.

13 Review of plans for Symposia, including Young Scientist Conference (Doc 12)

The Head of Science Programme informed the Committee that only little progress had been noted in relation to the “Symposium on Marine Environmental Indicators Utility in Meeting Regulatory Needs” scheduled for November 2007. With regard to sponsoring, DEFRA had been confirmed. Concern was raised that a scientific steering committee had not yet been

established. Close monitoring and follow-up by the Secretariat was prescribed for this symposium.

ConC was informed that the Symposium on Marine Mortality of Salmon would most likely take place in 2009.

The Chair of PUB enquired as to status on the MPA symposium. The Chair of ACE confirmed that the symposium was at a quite advanced planning stage.

The Chair of PUB made a general comment regarding the information flow. He requested that any changes should be communicated directly to each individual (responsible) chair and copied to the Chair of PUB.

The ConC Chair encouraged committee chairs to look for new symposia after 2009. The JMS would allow for three volumes per year.

Action: Follow-up on “Symposium on Marine Environmental Indicators Utility in Meeting Regulatory Needs” by the MHC Chair and the Secretariat.

Action: Draft resolutions should be prepared for the last three symposia on the revolving list well in advance of the 2006 ASC by the Chairs of DFC, MCC, and OCC together with the Head of Science Programme.

14 Update on Action Plan Progress Review

Julie Gillin, ICES Data Centre Manager, introduced Mike Drew who is the new ICES programmer for administrative databases since 1 February. His first tasks were to modify the ASC registration system according to the requirements and changes endorsed by the Bureau in February, to complete development of the address database, and to make a database for the user survey. He will be programming the Action Plan database next.

After discussions with secretariat personnel and other stakeholders, including present or former Committee or Expert Group and ConC Chairs, two options for a database had been prepared for ConC. The Action Plan Database (APD) would serve several purposes:

- Monitor the Strategic Goals outlined in the Strategic Plan,
- Increase the transparency of Expert Groups;
- Greater focus on strategic goals;
- Enhance communication between groups, (including link to the address database, who is referring to which group);
- Easy look-up and linking to reports;
- Easy administration (all information is automatically formatted and inserted in report).

Two options for implementing the database concept were presented to be decided by ConC:

Option 1 could be implemented on a short notice, but would primarily serve the purpose of monitoring the Strategic Goals. The system would only be accessible by the Secretariat. The output is a mapping of Terms of Reference to the Action Plan.

Option 2 would take a little longer to implement but would serve all purposes mentioned above. Chairs have write access for their groups and read access to other groups, read access by other members of groups can be made possible. Input from the Secretariat is in the range of 100–200 hours (exclusive of system development), while Chairs will require twice their current efforts in the first year (2006) as a maximum and down to half for the following years.

The output in addition to that of Option One is the complete Expert Group and Report references, an overview of progress on the Action Plan can be tracked by ConC, and overlap or duplication of work can be identified (where not complimentary). In addition, items that are not referenced by any group and where no progress is being made can be spotted.

Integration with the meeting schedule to reflect the right order of group meetings may be possible in a later version. There will be a “Chair-friendly”, interactive interface.

ConC agreed to support Option 2 as proposed by the Data Centre. A live demonstration of the database is then envisaged for the coming ASC 2006. For people not familiar with databases there will be a hands-on trial set-up during the poster session. Secretariat staff will be available for assistance in using the system, especially since there will be a data management Theme Session which most of the data management staff will be attending.

15 Review of ICES activities

15.1 Review of the development of the ICES position paper (Doc 13)

Another review of the document by ConC is requested by the Bureau. Some views on the document were collected:

- Good stuff – but quite fractionated – some of it may be more suitable for a strategic science plan, some of it reads like a guidance document, other sections read like webpage information for the ICES community. The Head of Science Programme clarified that there is no section dealing specifically with the Ecosystem Approach since a duplication of the good work done by ACE there seemed unnecessary. Similarly, coastal zone management issues were left untouched since those issues are mostly treated under national legislation regimes.
- There could be a better balance between advice and science topics.
- It should be discernible that much of the ICES work is part of the mainstream science – it sounds as if ICES is not part of it. The sequence of issues could be changed, putting climate change up front. Ecosystem dynamics and modelling should be added.
- This document is useful – structured, simplified, and positive – not too self-searching. It puts the organization in the global context as seen from the ICES window.
- Methane hydrates: Currently this field is explored by consortia funded by energy companies and governments. The issue is likely to gain importance in the future and should therefore be dealt with separately instead of summarizing it under pollution or sediment extraction. We are talking about an energy resource potentially equal in importance to that of oil and gas.
- Most important is what do we want to achieve with this paper, who is the addressee? It could be an internal guide or it could be an information document for the outside world. In the latter case it should be broader in order to address our clients. Could this paper serve both purposes? We have a Strategic Plan, an Action Plan, and nothing more tangible in the middle.
- It is discursive – open, frank, and honest. Maybe in places it is too open while further up it comes across as a policy document. There should be consistency throughout the document. It was first intended as an internal discussion document, but meanwhile the commission was interested in seeing it.

Action: A subgroup consisting of the Chairs of PUB, OCC, ACME, and the Head of Science Programme was formed to refine the document. The subgroup was charged with digesting the comments from ConC and restructuring/revising it accordingly. The draft should then be circulated to ConC before it is submitted to the Bureau for approval. **Deadline** for distributing a revised version within ConC is 31 May 2006.

15.2 Update on the European Marine Strategy

The Head of Science Programme updated ConC on the two main tracks of activities here. The Marine Strategy has been released as announced in fall 2005. The Ecosystem Approach to Management is a prominent feature; another element is to encourage cooperation between member states beyond the EU. ICES has contributed, i.e. with the concept of bioregions in the European oceans. Another important document is the Green Paper, thought to be a policy document and to be released some time this spring. Currently there are drafting groups for individual sections. ICES has been involved in the consultation process for some of the sections.

The second track is the so-called EMMA process (Working Group on European Marine Monitoring and Assessment). After the first phase of EMMA a core-group has been established including ICES, JRC, and the Regional Conventions. The core-group has had one meeting in fall in Brussels chaired by EEA and DG Environment. ICES (Head of Science Programme) and JRC have drafted a science paper for the EMMA process which by nature covers many coastal water topics. Where appropriate, material from ICES Expert Groups has been included. The documents outline the science needs for future monitoring and assessment activities under EMMA.

ConC **appreciated** the presentation given by the Head of Science Programme.

15.3 Update on ICES/CoML cooperation (Doc 18)

The Census of Marine Life (CoML) is a big research endeavor funded by the Sloan Foundation. The origins of the project go back to the ICES ASC in Baltimore when the first ideas were solicited. It is now in its sixth year of global activities and has produced excellent science in certain areas, especially in its projects on deep-sea communities and species. CoML will come to an end in 2010, so at this stage ideas and perspectives for a continuation are collected. ICES has been invited to the Annual All Program meeting in Frankfurt in 2005 to give ICES view on how to continue. Using advice from the ConC Vice-chair the Head of Science Programme has recommended focusing on the areas of excellence and on areas not covered by governmental activities. It was also indicated how ICES might be able to assist in developing or supporting CoML activities. A follow-up meeting has been convened by members of the International Scientific Steering Committee of CoML with ICES officials, including the President and the ConC Chair. A first step will be to develop relations with the Steering Cttee. of the European CoML (EuroCoML), the secretariat of which is based in Edinburgh.

It was considered useful for ICES to have a connection with CoML. The involvement of Expert Groups is encouraged, for instance WGDEEP and WGDEC. We do have a lot of interactions with CoML on the level of individual scientists or institutions.

16 Update of activities under WGRED and AMAWGC

WGRED

This Expert Group has worked largely as last year. Changes to procedures proposed by ACE were not adopted for logistical reasons and this was discussed between the chairs of ACE and WGRED, albeit not with WGRED members. The main business was the updating of the regional descriptions, and continuing to act as a “clearing house” for important information. New input information was made available and incorporated, improving the ecosystem descriptions. WGRED had provided ToRs to a range of assessment groups, asking for feedback. Some groups were enthusiastic; others (unfortunately most) ignored it completely. This mirrored a similar, previous experience by SGPRISM and SGGROMAT where uptake was effectively zero.

WGRED proposed to undertake a small number of case studies examining practical steps to evaluate management strategies for robustness in relation to environmental variability. This will be carried out using the framework developed by SGMAS. Examples include Icelandic capelin and NS herring.

ConC **agreed** that, to date, SGMAS had focused its work on fishery issues and that in future work it should collaborate with WGRED or WGECCO.

ConC **supports** the case study proposals made by WGRED and that these be conducted mid-term, although they are not currently part of the ToRs for this Expert Group.

AMAWGC

This used to be the meeting of assessment working group chairs only. This year ConC proposed it be expanded to include many more chairs, e.g. from survey-based Expert Groups. Due to the changeover in ACFM chairmanship, not all these additional chairs had been invited. In the end, attendance was similar to last year. A presentation on how to integrate the survey groups with assessment groups was made by the Chair of LRC and this was welcomed. As a result of the attendance of mainly assessment WG chairs, AMAWGC was mostly devoted to stock assessment issues. This provided the possibility of discussing realignment in the assessment process to allow a focus on management strategies and on mixed fisheries. AMAWGC developed roadmaps and work plans for Expert Groups to reduce the long lists of ToRs and to provide priorities. ConC noted the need in the future to consider what kind of products we want out of this process.

Integration of ecosystem groups with assessment groups was discussed, and this was felt to be an important but difficult challenge. Meeting and advice time frames make this difficult. Closer interaction with WGRED was recommended, and the possibility of regional assessment groups including ecosystem effects was considered. It was suggested that AMAWGC should concentrate on a single additional issue within each meeting, e.g. gear technology or physical oceanography, and invite the appropriate Expert Group or Committee Chairs to support this. This would reduce attendance to manageable levels, and these people could attend only a part of the meeting. Discussions should concentrate on the product needed from other Expert Groups, and on feedback.

The Chair of ACE proposed establishing a study group tasked with developing management advice in an ecosystem context on a three-year timescale. This group could build on the case-studies proposed by WGRED and would allow a dedicated group to address the key issues away from the pressures of assessment groups or WGRED.

17 Data Management Issues

17.1 Information on Data Centre Business Plan

Julie Gillin gave an update on the Data Centre activities.

Current activities

The following tasks are on the agenda for 2006 ff:

Bureau Working Group Data Development Project (BWGDDP):

- Data Strategy (Approved by Council Oct.05);
- Data Policy (Approved by Council Oct.05);
- Client interviews (conducted through 2005);
- User survey (conducted at ASC 2005; evaluation by SGMID in May, 2006);
- Data Centre Business Plan.

In 2005 several tasks have been accomplished in the Data Centre. Two systems were developed: InterCatch (jointly with DIFRES), and the “Database on Accessions and Documentation” (DAD). Data deliveries and processing were made to OSPAR, HELCOM, EEA, and assessment working groups. Further to that, free formats for data deliveries were introduced which mean additional work for the Data Centre side. Harmonization of data handling via common data policy & common utilities has been accomplished and good progress on historic fish data and physical oceanographic data was made. Pilot digitization of historic plankton data (by SAHFOS) was completed, commissioned by CoML.

In addition to ongoing and routine activities, there are a number of new activities for 2006:

- Implement Data Policy & Strategy;
- Implement InterCatch (2006 is “test year” – version 2 development planned for 2007);
- Complete phase 1; initiate phase 2 of DOME (Database on Oceanography and Marine Environment);
- Enhance DATRAS (possible funding);
- Develop and maintain administrative systems (address database, action plan & user survey databases);
- SeaDataNet (3–6 manmonths/year, 2006–2010).

Future challenges for the Data Centre are especially to maintain legacy systems while new systems are developed. One example is the migration of legacy data to DOME. Further to that, there are business plan activities such as project plans, involvement of expert groups, etc. It has to be considered if GIS capabilities should be part of the Data Centre facilities or not. The Data Centre is exploring the possibility of joining forces with the excellent GIS facilities of EEA. Historical data digitization and data rescue are to be continued, or are at least topics listed for consideration. And finally the issue of quality assurance needs to be followed-up appropriately.

During the discussion that followed it turned out that ConC was sceptical to see a GIS facility at the Secretariat as an integrating tool, and it was questioned whether there is a need for a GIS system at ICES. It would be nice to have, but is it necessary to carry out work in assessments? Also, this would require resources that the Data Centre does not have. Consequently, ConC was not in favour of developing GIS facilities at the ICES Secretariat.

The Data Centre is in need of input from ConC. The DC is trying to find its place in the world scenery of marine data centres. The DC is spread very thin, facing new challenges with

approximately 7.5 FTEs available for scientific database and system work. The important question is how to move forward – should we concentrate or diversify? This cannot be answered by the Data Centre alone. It requires external assistance which is currently being consulted. The final decision on this will be up to ConC.

The consulting process will be overseen by a review group; the Head of Science Programme and the Chairs of OCC and ConC have been involved in the set-up of the process. The first review of ICES data and how they fit in today's oceanography landscape (the entire array: physical, fisheries as well as ecological/biological) is currently undertaken by the Deputy Director of BODC, Lesley Rickards. As soon as her report is available, the review group will be established. The ICES Data Centre will act as secretariat for this group. Committees may be represented through their chairs. Other input for this group will include web statistics supplied by the Data Centre and SGMID's evaluation of the Data User Survey.

Action: Based on a factual report and other information discussed further below, the review group (Head of Science Programme, Chairs of OCC and ConC) shall:

- a) consider whether there is a role for a regional oceanography data centre or whether the strategy is in general for a wider (e.g. global) ranging centre, and;
- b) support, in light of the decision to develop the ICES Data Centre, distributed databases to propose an efficient division of labour among the organisations (international and national) that are involved in compiling oceanographic data at the regional level.
- c) as a step towards its conclusion, the review group shall answer: what the value of ICES Oceanographic data is to **i)** the Science community (split into physical oceanographers and biological oceanographers), **ii)** the advisory community (ICES advisory committees and their working groups), and **iii)** Other users.

17.2 User Survey Status

The database for the user survey is fully developed and delivered to SGMID for evaluation as previously planned and approved by the Bureau. SGMID will evaluate responses at their meeting (8–10 May) and provide input for the ConC-driven *ad hoc* recommendations group. The Data Centre will follow-up on specific issues. For further information and clarification, a web-based survey may also be conducted.

18 Progress reports from Publications, Science, and Advisory Committees

ACE

The Chair of ACE introduced a document on “ACE Issues 2006” (Annex 4). ICES has played a significant role in developing the Ecosystem Approach to Management (EAM). There is only a small pool of scientists available for dealing with the respective requests from the clients. Clients have provided limited funds for these requests. Main actions for the Chair will be to work with the Client Commissions to generate the appropriate requests. The ConC's point of view is asked for now to encourage Expert Groups to develop strategic and tactical objectives and to give that sort of work high priority. The number of experts dealing with the quantitative implementation of the EAM is limited; however, in some areas it is well on the way, the WGFE being a good example.

ACME

The Chair of ACME reported from his committee. For the upcoming spring meeting there are only five specific requests for advice from Client Commissions. Only two of these will be dealt with at the meeting. However, for next year, HELCOM and OSPAR have promised to come up with more work. With respect to the communication issues discussed for the Science Committees there are similar problems with feedback from members of ACME. The information for the ACME report is mostly communicated through the Expert Group reports. ACME has adopted a procedure of scanning the reports and the ToRs for items that are potentially useful for advice.

ACFM

The Chair of ACFM reported three areas for priority: 1) Capacity for advice and developing management strategies, 2) The Ecosystem Approach to Management, and 3) Developing the fleet base advice. Some of these issues were discussed earlier under Agenda Item 15.4 on AMAWGC (see above).

With regard to fisheries advice, there needs to be a procedure for advice on mixed fisheries. WK MIXMAN met earlier this year but there is a need to have a second workshop bringing in expertise from the economic side. Reference points on long-term management advice need to be developed. With a view to the newly established RACs, assessment groups will need to be regional on the longer term. RAC cooperation will be discussed in ACFM and ICES advice will be presented to RACs and channelled through the commission. The dialogue with the RACs will ensure more interaction of ICES with the stakeholders.

EAM – there is much interaction with ACE and ACME. It is not very concretely specified in the action plan for ACFM, and the current link between stock assessment and environment is WGRED. However, WGRED is still looking at things retrospectively and is not dealing with issues the way for instance SGRECVAP does. Another example is the stock collapse of anchovy in 2005; blue whiting and mackerel recruitment has been excellent now for 10 years, something nobody can explain. What are the linkages between environmental factors and fisheries management advice, and how can this be integrated into advice? Possible solutions are needed while we are looking into situations where changes are ongoing but unexplained. The main problem is the lag effect, the time lag between an event in the system and the point of perception. REGNS was able to see the regime shift of the mid-nineties retrospectively; however, it would be invaluable to perceive such events earlier or even to predict them. This capability is central for incorporating changes into assessments. With regard to the recruitment science already available from groups like SGRECVAP it is worthwhile to link this with the advisory side. However, the time problem is the usual response from advisory. A workshop might be considered to address the points/questions raised by the ACFM Chair. What support/information is specifically needed from the Science Expert Groups? In the meantime WGRED should retain its “clearinghouse” function, and it might also look into stocks over the past decade and describe what changes or shifts have happened. AMAWGC should allow the time for strategic planning with a view to involving the science groups in the advice.

The following comments were also made:

- The general issue of transparency and communication;
- meeting with clients;
- in the Advisory report it was proposed to reformat the stock summary sections, making them more visual and clear with regard to our message. There is also scope to take a critical look at the introductory section;

- There will be a direct link between regional advice with councils (RACs) and ICES. The more general requests for advice should be channelled through the commission.

Oceanography Committee

In general the work is going fine. More interaction is required between WGRP and advice as discussed above. It was noted that WGPE is in a difficult situation, and the OCC recommended it to be shut down. WGPE has been too conservative dealing with outdated issues. The discussed merger of SGMID and WGMDM will take place as planned. The WGPBI Workshop came up with interesting themes which are highly relevant for the fisheries side. The goal is to produce new time-series by which larval transport processes can be made operational, and it is time for ICES to look into such information. The Chair asked the OCC Chair to make a suggestion before the ASC on how to proceed on this issue.

Baltic Committee

Everything is going smoothly. Late last year, the SGEH met in Kaliningrad. The report of the seagoing Workshop on fish disease identification is delayed, but should be available soon. WKIAB ToRs needed some reconciliation with HELCOM which was not possible before the ASC, but has now been settled in a good and beneficial manner. WKIAB took place in early March with good attendance and success.

Diadromous Fish Committee

Niall O'Maoleidigh will continue as Chair of DFC for 2006 following the resignation of M. Beveridge. A new election will be held at the 2006 ASC. Currently there are no DFC parented Expert Groups but the committee is keeping a watching brief on WGBAST, WGNAS which will be meeting in April, and WGEEL which has just met. The Study Group on the Status of Diadromous Fish has finished its report (by correspondence) and this will be put up on the system very shortly for particular attention of LRC, WGFE, and WGNAS.

Theme sessions: Convenors have reported that there appears to be a lot of interest in the session "Is there more to eels than slime" in Maastricht.

Symposia: the 2005 ICES /NASCO Interactions symposium was a successful one. About 30 papers have been submitted for inclusion in the *ICES Journal of Marine Science* of which about 25 made it through the review process. The ICES/PICES/NASCO Symposium on Marine Mortality of Salmon is still waiting for programmes under SALSEA or associated projects to start.

Resource Management Committee

Most of the work is running smoothly. Two Expert Group meetings have been held. SGRAMA has very little participation and it was hoped that it would see attendance from the advisory side and also from non-experts in risk analysis. The Secretariat has sent out a request to Delegates to encourage further participation. Multispecies assessment is attempted in SGMSNS for the North Sea and the SG should be made a WG. This would make it easier to attract participation. In preparation, the ConC Chair suggested that the group presents a good justification for this change. The need for a new stomach sampling is well perceived as a consequence of the regime shift in the North Sea. That would be a big exercise where funding by the EC would play a major role. But it forms the basis for advice on multispecies assessments.

Fisheries Technology Committee

ConC was informed that the WGFAST meeting has 70 registered participants, 25 of these come from Australia. There are two major activities in FTC. The first one is related to the

reorganisation of FTC in order to take into account new technology. A series of new technologies in *in situ* observation (e.g. optical imaging), survey design, or dealing with the effects of fish behaviour have been developed. The FTC Chair had attended the SCOR technical panel meeting in Frankfurt in November 2005 to explore collaboration with this group. It was noted that the SCOR WG activities are filling the existing gaps in FTC activities with regard to technology surveys. There will be follow-up work in Hobart with regard to the SCOR WG. The second major activity in FTC is to improve the inclusion of FTC activities into the advisory process. The WGFTFB has started this process via participation in AMAWGC, and is still exploring the possibilities. Preparations for the Humboldt Current Symposium in 2006 are running smoothly. The 2006 Symposium on Fishing Technology is still looking for a guest editor.

Living Resources Committee

LRC highlighted a number of key arising issues:

- The database problem identified by WGBIFS at the ASC in Aberdeen, which has been addressed in collaboration with the Secretariat.
- The effect of changes in membership of EGs over time was raised. Particularly in survey EGs there appears to be a tendency for membership to shift from scientific to technical (e.g. PGHERS & WGMEGS). A balance between these two areas needs to be struck, and institutes should be aware of the issues.
- SGRECVAP on serial recruitment failure in some North Sea fish species proved unable to attract participants from the biological oceanographic community, despite the key role that this discipline should have in understanding recruitment processes.
- LRC proposed that EGs should be allowed to adopt a “virtual” structure. The members would remain in contact, but there would be no formal meetings. The group would retain a watching brief over their field and propose individual workshops to ICES as appropriate. The model is based on a proposal from SGRESP, and the spawned Workshop WKIMS hosted under OCC.

Marine Habitat Committee

Preparations for WKFMMPA have started with hiring a project manager who started his work 1 February. The first workshop will be held in early April at ICES Headquarters. The project goes well beyond looking at concepts for the German MPAs and results may well be used to designate other MPAs requiring fishery regulations before the end of the decade. SGNSBP is a very active intersessional workshop, first held in November 2005 in Belgium and now in the publication phase. A CRR will be finalised at their next meeting in April.

Publications Committee

All ToRs from Expert Groups related to publications have been circulated by the PUB Chair. Negotiations for the future publisher of the ICES JMS Oxford University Press (from January 2007) are continuing well on details, e.g., there will be online access to the journal. The issue of quality assurance of Advisory Committee reports will be discussed and settled with the Chairs. There was a recommendation from ConC last year to increase the working hours for the ICES Technical Editor. Partial increase of working hours has happened. However, the Chairs of ConC and PUB expressed concerns that the increase was not to the level recommended. The Chair of ConC is to discuss the matter with the General Secretary.

Other matters

ConC noted that Science Committee reports are currently not available on the website. They are delivered to the Secretariat by Committee chairs under considerable pressure. The reports

were uploaded immediately after the ASC for further editing and updates by Chairs. Due to technical reasons they have been temporarily removed. They will be re-loaded to the web under each Committee in week 12.

19 Update on MCAP and Bureau meetings (Doc 14)

MCAP meetings

The Chair of MCAP reported from the MCAP meeting, outlining the 2006 calendar and priorities for the year. The main emphasis was on the timing of the advice delivered to the Commission from twice a year to only once in June. ICES will explore this option in an open-minded way. It will require consultations though with our member states and it will have bearings on the quality of the information, because results from autumn surveys that are not reported until the following June may be outdated.

The Symposium on Management Strategies in Galway is well underway and will also see attendance from DG Fish sending eight people. It may be a good training exercise for their staff.

The establishment of RACs was discussed as well as ICES interaction with RACs. The RACs emerged on the initiative of the EC to more efficiently review and implement the CFP. They also fulfil the needs of stakeholders and at the same time play a role in defining their needs. They consist of fishery managers, industrial representatives, and (regional) NGOs, but are not a homogeneous body. They are certainly interested in obtaining the right science and in asking the right questions. The EC has indicated that it would provide funding for the research needs of the RACs which might promote the launching of RAC/ICES joint ventures. Some of the RAC members have a limited knowledge about what ICES is doing and how. It will certainly be useful to start a dialogue at the ASC and invite them to participate. Their visit should be anchored in a formal initial event involving ConC, for instance a lunch with introductions to Committee and Theme Session topics, a kind of “User’s guide to ICES” with a flavour of ICES science. Time: about two hours with presentations. Delegates will need to be informed.

ConC agreed to invite the RACs to the ASC 2006. There should be a formal invitation from the General Secretary. The MCAP Chair will be responsible for the final programme.

Bureau meeting in February 2006

The General Secretary presented the most important Bureau decisions from the February meeting:

- Workplan – for the positioning of ICES via policy papers the Bureau suggested formalising the process. One example is a future position paper on the anticipated EC green paper.
- EuroGOOS – ICES is to improve contacts with EuroGOOS. Lies with the Head of Science Programme.
- Increase the commitment of the ACFM Chair to a fulltime post – it will be included in the MoU with DG Fish. The workload of the Chair will be increased if the clients agree to pay for it.
- RACs – the cost of ICES for responding to RACs should be included in the MoU with the Commission, if there is additional work which is still open.
- BSRP – a better integrating of this GEF-funded project into the ICES Secretariat is desirable. The same applies to the ICES/GLOBEC secretariat, a point strongly recommended by the Bureau.
- Quality manager – With some commitment from the Commission we will be able to establish a position for a quality manager.

- Council meeting and ASC – The Bureau had decided to maintain separation until at least 2008. The time lag between Council and ASC is rather advantageous since it provides more time to review the ToRs. No major cost-savings are gained from the separation.
 - Hosting the ASC – a formal document will be produced by the Science Programme specifying the commitment required for the ASC host countries.
 - ASC fee – will be at the same level as 2005. The Bureau decided to maintain or raise it respectively to support and improve participation of young scientists.
 - Council Agenda – the focus of Council meetings should evolve into more strategic discussions. There will be an extra half day for the Council this year to discuss these issues. ConC was encouraged to give some input for consideration, when appropriate.
 - Strategic Plan – an update will be started before 2007. A proposal for the process will be developed by the Bureau. The results from WKREP and follow-ups might imply changes for the Strategic Plan.
 - ESF Marine Science Board – ICES should seek to improve relations with the Board, as well as with the Polar Board. The Chair of ConC should seek appropriate contacts.
- ICES Recognition Programme – the outline prepared by the ConC subgroup was endorsed with slight modifications. **Action:** The Recognition Programme subgroup will finalise the Recognition Programme in consensus with the General Secretary and President.
- NAMMCO (North Atlantic Marine Mammals Convention) – ICES will not sign up to the management point of view to NAMMCO activities as outlined in the proposal for a MoU. The Bureau proposed that we declare our interest in cooperation and in having good scientific relationships. A Letter of Understanding on scientific cooperation will be drafted. The General Secretary will contact NAMMCO about further procedures.

The Chair thanked the Chair of MCAP and the General Secretary for their presentations.

20 Any other business

20.1 Approval of WGACEGG TOR (Doc 15)

The Council had requested ConC to adopt the Terms of Reference for the Working Group on Acoustic and Egg Surveys for Sardine and Anchovy in ICES areas VIII and IV [WGACEGG]. The Terms of Reference can be seen in **Annex 5**.

ConC adopted the ToR for WGACEGG with no comments.

20.2 Environmental Science and Environmentalism (Doc 17)

The President introduced Document 17. Environmental sciences and environmentalism are orthogonal to each other. Ideology and science should not be mixed when dealing with the public or in scientific discussions and publications. Since it had been an issue recently, ConC and MCAP should deal with it.

What is the role of science when informing society? There are concerns about publication practises and performance of journals. If a paper raises bad news there is sometimes a greater chance of it being publicised. Our way of doing work includes rigorous peer review. We could establish an internal code of conduct.

Action: The Publications Committee will consider issuing a statement in the JMS highlighting the importance of objectivity in publications independent of personal or societal values.

20.3 Invitation from the World Cultural Council (Doc 19)

The Head of Science Programme introduced the background Document 19. ICES has been encouraged to nominate outstanding scientists from its marine science community for the Albert Einstein World Award of Science.

Action: The Head of Science Programme will approach the World Cultural Council and thank them for the invitation, informing them that ICES will not be able to solicit nominations this year. ICES will, however, in the future be pleased to take part in the nomination process.

Action: The Secretariat will suggest a procedure for future nominations and circulate this well in advance of the ASC.

20.4 Authorship of Expert Group reports

The Chairs of WKNCT (Workshop on New and Classic Techniques for the Determination of Numerical Abundance and Biovolume of HAB-species – evaluation of the cost, time-efficiency and intercalibration methods) had requested permission from ICES to add the names of the three authors on the front and on the second page of the report.

The question raised by WKNCT was recognised as an important principle question for ConC to address since the present system gives no acknowledgement/recognition to Expert Group members for the considerable effort made. A majority of ConC members was against allowing authorship of Expert Group reports and it was felt that it would be necessary for ConC to deal with the issue in more detail. The Chair of PUB agreed to canvas ConC members more extensively, and the results of that consultation are to be discussed at the next PUB meeting.

In conclusion, WKNCT did not obtain permission to add names of the three authors on the front of the report

Action: ConC asked the Publications Committee (PUB) to consider the appropriateness of allowing authorship of Expert Group (EG) reports, and produce recommendations and/or guidelines for discussion at the September meeting of ConC. All committee chairs and their committees will be included in the process and asked to give their feedback to PUB. The key points that will be considered were identified by the Chair of the Publications Committee as:

- Whether authorship of EG reports is appropriate given the input of many participants?
- There is considerable effort needed in producing a report but there may not be recognition of that contribution?
- If authorship is appropriate for EG reports, what should be the guidelines for authorship?
- What could be the impact of institutional regulations on authorship and publication on the production and turnaround of EG reports?

20.5 GLOBEC

The General Secretary outlined the budget problem that exists currently with hosting the ICES/GLOBEC North Atlantic Programme and Regional Office in the Secretariat. There is a

Bureau decision which is valid on budget reasons; however, independent of that and of concern for ConC is the integration of the results of CCC (Cod and Climate Change Programme, the main activity) into the ICES science and advisory programmes. ConC is now to recommend ways and means for that. Keith Brander outlined his activities inside and outside ICES. He would like to see more involvement of advisory groups in CCC activities. However, there is an apparent communication problem, since for instance the St. Johns meeting had been largely unknown to advisory people. The conference became only known at the ASC 2005 when ToRs were reviewed. The President mentioned that the fishery management strategy science in North America would be an addressee for e.g. the regime shift issues, recovery science, etc. ACFM, so far, has not expressed a high degree of interest. Instead, the reverse way of actively feeding the information into the advisory world is much more promising. This was supported by the Chair of ACFM as it is in line with the perspective of having long-term management advice (background of climate change).

There is no doubt that GLOBEC is very relevant for the science within ICES. A key issue, though, is that assessment science is still unchanged and evidence from CCC, assuming that this is the mature part of the science, has not been taken on board. Apparently, CCC has failed to translate its science (for instance the regime shift) into a better framework, e.g. to identify biological reference points. There should also be an evaluation of why such a clear regime shift has failed to, for instance, change our reference points in assessments. If the cod example has failed how then should it work for other species?

In discussion it was queried whether CCC had addressed the right questions. Maybe the results have not been communicated to the right people in the system. CCC scientists should now go actively to assessment fora. The project has existed for ten years. We need a clear, concrete plan for how to use this information. The Chair of ACFM suggested to ultimately widen the scope beyond addressing cod. Funding received last year from France and Denmark had a view to widening the scope. Plans are to be made for an ACFM/GLOBEC workshop soon to identify what needs to be done. Further to that, a presentation to ACFM in May and to WGNSSDS in May should be considered.

Action: The GLOBEC office was asked to prepare an action plan for how to implement material from WGCCC into the assessment work to be presented at the ACFM meeting in May 2006.

20.6 Term of office for Committee Chairs

ConC maintained its **recommendation** to the Bureau and Council to increase the term of office for all Committee Chairs from three to four years. This new proposal implies an option for committees to re-elect their chair for an additional year.

The proposed change to the Rules of Procedure 30 (i) and (vi):

- (i) The Chair of the Consultative Committee and the Chairs of Committees established according to Rules 27 and 28 shall hold office for a term of three years, with the possibility of a one-year extension upon approval by the respective Committee, and shall assume office on the first day of January next following their election; they shall not be eligible for re-election for the immediately succeeding term.
- (vi) The Consultative Committee and any other Committee authorized to do so by Council Resolution, shall each select a Vice-Chair from among its members. The Vice-Chair shall vacate office after three or four years, whichever period matches the term of office of the Chair, or on ceasing to be a member of the Committee, whichever occurs first.

ConC also recommends that the possibility of extending the three-year term of office by one year should apply for the Chair of MCAP upon approval by the Committee.

20.7 Teaching

The RMC Chair addressed the question whether or not ICES should expand its offers for courses and training. The current WKAFAT is a success story which sees a very good attendance and feedback. The demand is much higher than the maximum number of participants available. There may even be a demand for a new course on evaluating management strategies so future ways of, for instance rotating topics may be considered or alternatives discussed.

The production of a textbook was discussed. The RMC Chair who is also co-chairing WKAFAT made the point that it is also about mediating the way of thinking and getting a feeling for the practical problems. WKAFAT is an important element of quality assurance in ICES. It is an investment in future generations of assessment scientists. ICES is the right body to convey a common understanding of the most up-to-date advanced techniques. Another option is a web-based course with regular meetings of the actors and owners of the knowledge. It was felt that such courses are a good promotion for ICES. There was a suggestion to use the increased ASC fee to give these workshops financial support.

Action: A subgroup (Chairs of RMC, DFC, and ACFM) was formed to further explore feasible options to be presented at the ASC ConC meeting in September. The Secretariat will be involved as appropriate.

21 Closing

The General Secretary thanked the Chair and participants for a good and informative meeting. He found it sometimes hard to follow the discussion. It would be constructive to summarise more often where the meeting had arrived and what conclusions had been drawn and agreed. He suggested a more formal decision process and suggested written proposals for decisions, handed out in advance. It would be a way of structuring this better.

The Chair of ConC, agreed that it is important to keep the discussion focused and it is also important for ConC to be able to exchange views and ideas – sometimes in an open and broad discussion. Most of the time we have a good balance.

The Chair thanked everyone for attendance and thanked the Secretariat for excellent support.

The meeting was closed on Saturday at 12.20.

Annex 1: List of participants

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Annex 2: WKREP breakout group assignment

Consider the system of expert groups, science committees, ConC and the Annual Science Conference.

1. How well does the system work?

- What's good about it?
- What does it do poorly?
- Where are the weak links?

2. In particular, how well does the system match science priorities with advisory system needs?

- How well do science committees know what (in terms of science) is needed for advice?
- Are they responsive to needs?
- Do advisory committees know what science is needed?
- Do advisory committees recognize opportunities arising from new science?

3. Underlying causes – what's behind problems?

- Lack of funds?
- Lack of commitment?
- Over work and over commitment?
- Lack of expertise?
- Unclear roles and responsibilities?
- System weaknesses?
- ????????

4. What about the Science Committees?

- Do we need them? If so, for what?
- Are there too many or too few or does it matter?
- What “organizing principle” do you suggest (by discipline, ecosystem, societal issue, whatever creates interest)?
- How should they relate to expert groups and to CONC?
- How should membership be decided?
- How should they operate (e.g., annual meetings at ASC, more frequent meetings, ad hoc meetings, virtual/electronic meetings)?

5. If you were “king or queen?” how would you improve the system?

- Fine tuning or big changes?
- Structural changes?
- Changes in roles and responsibilities?
- Changes in procedures?
- Changes in membership and participation?

Be creative, but also realistic!

6. Finally, what's the role of the Delegates in making your vision of the system successful?

- Take control or get out of the way?
- Match commitments to resources?
- Help to broaden participation?
- Be mentors for young scientists?
- ?????

Annex 3: Theme Sessions proposed for 2007

| Proposal originates from: | Theme Session | Conveners | Linked to Committee/EG |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Proposed for the ConC mid-term meeting 2006 by Bernard A. Megrey and Tom Noji | Comparative Marine Ecosystem Structure and Function: Descriptors and Characteristics | Bernard A. Megrey (USA), Jason Link (USA), Webjørn Melle (Norway), Ian Perry (Canada) | LRC/OCC, REGNS, WGRED, WGECCO, WGZE, WGCCC |
| Proposed during the ASC 2005 | The role of sea ice in polar ecosystems | Garry Stenson, Canada; Ken Drinkwater, Norway; Kai Wieland, Greenland; Bob Dickson, CEFAS (SJ will check if he is still willing to be a convener) | LRC/OCC |
| Proposed during the ASC 2005 | Marine Biodiversity: A fish and fisheries perspective | Jim Ellis, Remment ter Hofstede and Henn Ojaveer | LRC |
| SGNSBP05 | Structure and dynamics of the North Sea benthos | H. Rees, E Vanden Berghe, S. Degraer and H. Rumohr | MHC |
| WGZE05 | Biogeographical changes in zooplankton communities; consequences for marine ecosystems | Luis Valdes and Peter Wiebe | WGZE05/WGRP OCC (also linked to ACE, ACFM, ACME) |
| Proposed by C. Jørgensen, University of Bergen | Evolution in the ocean: a missing perspective in fisheries science | Christian Jørgensen (Department of Biology, University of Bergen, Norway), Erin Dunlop (Adaptive Dynamics Network, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, Laxenburg, Austria) and Esben Moland Olsen (Centre for Ecological and Evolutionary Synthesis, University of Oslo, Norway) | OCC/LRC |

| Proposal originates from: | Theme Session | Conveners | Linked to Committee/EG |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Transferred from 2006 | Marine Biodiversity and Ecosystem Functioning | Carlo Heip, Hermann Hummel (both at Netherlands Institute for Ecology, Yerseke) + NN (someone from North America) | LRC |
| Transferred from 2006 | Modelling for Dummies: Individual-based predation and growth models, their parametrisation and uses in fisheries ecology | Markku Viitasalo & NN | BCC |
| Transferred from 2006 | Holistic approach to management of the human activities in the Baltic Large Marine Ecosystem | Jan Thulin, Andris Andrusaitis | BCC |
| Ian Davies, MHC2005 | Applications of passive sampling devices in environmental monitoring, assessment, research and testing | Foppe Smedes (RIKZ, the Netherlands) and Ian Davies (FRS, UK) | MHC |
| ASC2005 | Environmental and fishery effects of lost and abandoned fishing gears | Phil MacMullen SFIA, UK and Dominic Rihan, BIM, Ireland | FTC, WGFTFB |
| ASC05 | Ecological Carrying Capacity in Shellfish Culture | Francis O'Beirn (Ireland) and Peter Cranford (Canada) | MCC |
| Proposed during ASC 2005 | Monkfish across the world; common problems and common solutions | Jean-Jacques Maguire, Canada; Pilar Pereda, Spain; Rafael Duarte, Portugal; Helen Dobby, Scotland | LRC |
| Proposed during ASC 2005 | Impact of anthropogenic noise on marine organisms | Kjell Kristian Olsen, Norway; Edward Trippel, Canada Tony Hawkins, UK Peter Tyack, USA; Peter Liss IACMST, UK | LRC |
| Proposed during ASC 2005 | Increasing energy expenses – another challenge for fishers. How do we compensate? | Bjarti Thomsen, (Faroes) and an economist (Sean Pascoe?,UK), | FTC |
| Proposed during ASC 2005 | Mitigation of seal-induced catch and gear damages | Petri Suuronen (Finland) | FTC |
| Transferred from 2006 | Strategies for Monitoring and Assessing Diadromous Fish | ? | DFC |
| ASC 2005 | Alternate approaches to management advice and assessment in fisheries; flying outside the ICES Assessment WG paradigm | Conveners from LRC; Julian Addison & Joao Pereira, and one from ACFM | LRC/ACFM |

| Proposal originates from: | Theme Session | Conveners | Linked to Committee/EG |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| ASC2005 | Capacity and effort metrics: methods and madness | Axel Temming (Germany), plus one from RMC & FTC | RMC & FTC |
| | The ecosystem approach: What's the impact on marine science, science-based advice and management of marine ecosystems? | Dave Reid, Simon Jennings and Einar Svendsen, Martin Pastoors | (OCC/LRC/ACE/ACFM) |

Annex 4: ACE Issues 2006

Background

The ICES Advisory Committee on Ecosystems (ACE) was established by ICES in 2000¹. ACE has the primary responsibility within ICES for providing scientific information and advice on the status and outlook for marine ecosystems, and on exploitation of living marine resources in an ecosystem context. ACE is also expected to play a significant role in leading the strategic development of the science and advisory framework needed to support an ecosystem approach.

ACE is responsible for peer review of the scientific information submitted to the Committee and the formulation and provision of advice. It also seeks to provide feedback to its own Expert Groups and to the Science Committees on strategic directions for future science.

ACE met for the first time in 2001. The Committee is comprised of a Chair, 19 national members and invited *ex officio* members that can include key Expert Group and Science Committee Chairs plus Chairs of the Advisory Committee on Fisheries Management (ACFM) or the Advisory Committee on the Marine Environment (ACME). Hein Rune Skjoldal (Norway) chaired ACE from 2001–2003 and Simon Jennings (United Kingdom) from 2004–2006. A new Chair will be elected in 2006 for the period 2007–2009.

ACE working procedures

The main activities conducted by ACE are planned by the Management Committee for the Advisory Process (MCAP) in response to requests from the Client Commissions (the users of ICES advice). The advice provided by ACE ranges from tactical to strategic. The majority of income received from Client Commissions supports tactical advice, but ACE has continued to give strategic advice without full cost recovery in the interests of developing ICES capacity to support the needs of Client Commissions in the longer term.

Currently, there are 6 Expert Groups parented directly by ACE. These are the Study Group on Management of Integrated Data (SGMID), the Working Group for Regional Ecosystem Description (WGRED), the Working Group on Deepwater Ecology (WGDEC), the Working Group on Ecosystem Effects of Fishing Activities (WGECO), the Working Group on Marine Mammal Ecology (WGMME), and the Study Group on Effects of Sound in the Marine Environment (SGSME). In 2006, the work of ACE will also be supported by a workshop, co-sponsored by OSPAR, on Time Series Data relevant to Eutrophication Ecological Quality Objectives (WKEUT).

The work of ACE is also supported by Expert Groups (Working Groups, Study Groups, and Planning Groups) which may be parented by the Science Committees and/or other Advisory Committees.

Relationships with other Advisory Committees

Both the delivery of advice in an ecosystem context and the development of the integrated 'ICES Advice' require that ACE works closely with her sister committees ACFM and ACME. Interactions between Advisory Committees are managed by MCAP which, working with the Secretariat, allocates requests for advice and seeks to ensure internal consistency in advisory texts produced by the different Advisory Committees.

Relationship with the ICES Mission and Strategic Plan

ACE seeks to support the implementation of the ICES Strategic Plan (2002) as adopted by Delegates on 1 October 2001 and is expected to play a central role in supporting ICES mission

‘to advance the scientific capacity to give advice on human activities affecting, and affected by, marine ecosystems’. The ICES mission further requires that ICES should establish ‘effective arrangements to provide scientific advice’ and inform ‘interested parties and the public objectively and effectively about marine ecosystem issues’.

Two goals in the ICES Strategic Plan are particularly relevant to ACE. Goal 3 (evaluate options for sustainable marine-related industries, particularly fishing and mariculture) and Goal 4 (advise on the sustainable use of living marine resources and protection of the marine environment) are central to the work that ACE conducts. In order to meet these goals, ACE has to ensure that the tactical scientific advice that the Client Commissions need in the short term is of the highest quality while also developing the new capacity and skills that are needed to advise on emerging ecosystem issues, the latter in support of the longer-term aspirations of Client Commissions. Delivery on Goal 6 in the ICES Strategic Plan (maintain and further develop a modern and effective infrastructure to support ICES programmes) is essential if ACE is to balance effectively the requirements for tactical and strategic advice.

Key issues for ACE

Despite the important contributions of ICES to the development of an Ecosystem Approach^{2,3} and the commitments of Client Commissions to further adopting such an approach, the tools for providing advice in an ecosystem context and operationalising the Ecosystem Approach are not well developed. ACE and its supporting Expert Groups, working in conjunction with the Science Committees and other Advisory Committees, should play a central role in the development of an Ecosystem Approach. The principal issue affecting ACE has been lack of requests for advice from Client Commissions on strategic aspects of the implementation of an Ecosystem Approach and thus the absence of cost-recovery for this work. As a result, ACE has tended to reduce the priority given to strategic work and the operationalisation of an Ecosystem Approach within ICES has not been progressed with sufficient rapidity. Most strategic development of an Ecosystem Approach has therefore been conducted in Expert Groups where the members are individually committed to supporting the implementation of an Ecosystem Approach, consistent with higher level policy drivers. Such work is conducted in WGECO. However, the work often receives relatively cursory review and attention at ACE meetings and does not, at present, have significant influence on the activities of many other ICES Expert Groups.

Other issues that affect the output of ACE and the influence of ACE in developing an operational Ecosystem Approach are:

The extent to which National laboratories commit the scientists needed to support the operationalisation of an Ecosystem Approach.

The extent to which Client Commissions request and pay for advice that is strategic as opposed to tactical.

The extent to which the activities of the ICES Science Committees support work that will underpin the operationalisation of an Ecosystem Approach.

The extent to which the National and International bodies that fund the science conducted in National laboratories are supporting projects consistent with the development of the Ecosystem Approach.

Addressing these issues will be the key factor ensuring that ACE can fully support the aspirations of the ICES Strategic Plan and that ICES will continue to be favoured as a source of advice on the management of marine resources in an ecosystem context over the medium to long term.

Actions to address issues

- 1) Work with Client Commissions through MCAP-MICC to identify a role for ICES in providing strategic advice on the development of an Ecosystem Approach. When individual requests in this area have been forthcoming, such as when ICES was requested to develop 'Guidance on the application of the Ecosystem Approach to Management of human activities in the European marine environment' in support of the work of DG Environment on the EMS, ICES has demonstrated a capacity to work on strategic issues.
- 2) Encouraging Client Commissions to use ICES as a forum for dialogue on the development of strategic approaches, taking advantage of ICES recognised impartiality and its strong and diverse science base.
- 3) The Consultative Committee (ConC), working through the Advisory Committee and Science Committee Chairs, must encourage ICES Expert Groups to adopt strategic as well as tactical perspective and to take real steps towards using science to support the operationalisation of an Ecosystem Approach.
- 4) To allow for more emphasis on strategic advice at the annual meetings of ACE, the Committee should work with ICES to develop a more responsive (fast track) system for providing rapid and quality assured tactical advice. This should include protocols for working.
- 5) ICES should work with Delegates and other representatives of National laboratories to ensure that the expertise needed to support the operationalisation of an Ecosystem Approach is regularly available to ICES. Mechanism?
- 6) ICES should work with the National and International bodies that fund the science conducted in National laboratories to ensure that there is consistency in the strategic aspirations of these bodies and the role of ICES in supporting the development of an Ecosystem Approach. Mechanism?

References and notes

- ¹ Council Resolution 4DEL01 in ICES Annual Report 2000, Part 2, Page 215, Paragraph vi.
- ² ICES (2004). Report of the Thirteenth ICES Dialogue Meeting: Advancing scientific advice for an ecosystem approach to management: collaborating amongst managers, scientists, and other stakeholders. Dublin, Ireland, 26–27 April 2004. *ICES Cooperative Research Report* 267.
- ³ ICES (2005). Guidance on the application of the Ecosystem Approach to Management of human activities in the European marine environment. *ICES Cooperative Research Report* 273.

Annex 5: Terms of reference for WGACEGG as approved by ConC

The **Working Group on Acoustic and Egg Surveys for Sardine and Anchovy in ICES areas VIII and IV [WGACEGG]** (Chair: M. Bernal, Spain) will meet in Lisbon, Portugal, from 27 November to 1 December 2006 to:

- c) plan and coordinate egg surveys in ICES areas VIII and IX and standardise analysis procedures;
- d) plan and coordinate acoustic surveys in ICES areas VIII and IX and standardise analysis procedures;
- e) develop a framework to cross-validate egg production and acoustic methods for the estimation of Spawning Stock Biomass and its distribution;
- f) explore the possibilities to integrate egg production and acoustic based Spawning Stock Biomass estimates;
- g) finalise new egg production procedures and associated software developed under SGSBSA;
- h) integrate biological/environmental information from surveys and additional sources to study the relationships between sardine and anchovy and the pelagic community in ICES areas VIII and IX.

WGACEGG will report by 22 December 2006 for the attention of the Living Resources Committee, and ACFM.

Supporting information

| | |
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| Priority: | The Group has high priority as it will be responsible for providing integrated advice for two major and depleted stocks (sardine and anchovy) in this area. These stocks are distributed across national boundaries. The most important part of its work will be to standardise, plan, and analyse all the relevant surveys and to integrate these together to give the best possible advice to the WGMHSA for assessment purposes. It will also capitalise on the successful work of SGSBSA and of the EU project PELASSES. |
| Scientific Justification and relation to Action Plan: | <p>ToR a) Plan and coordinate egg surveys in ICES areas VIII and IX and standardize analysis procedures. Egg surveys for sardine and anchovy have been carried out since 1988 in Spain and Portugal, and since 1997 surveys were coordinated within different projects and the SGSBSA. A continuation of this planning and coordination, as well as analysis methodology standardization, will be carried out within WGACEGG. Also, attention will be paid to the coordination, planning, and standardization of CUFES surveys through all VIII and IX ICES areas. [Action Numbers 1.11; 1.13].</p> <p>ToR b) Plan and coordinate acoustic surveys in ICES areas VIII and IX and standardise analysis procedures. Planning and coordination of acoustic surveys in ICES areas VIII and IX have been attempted within the EU project PELASSES. WGACEGG is expected to improve planning and coordination between Spanish (IEO, AZTI), Portuguese (IPIMAR), and French (IFREMER) acoustic surveys, as well as standardising methods and analysis procedures between these countries/institutes. [Action Numbers 1.11; 1.13].</p> <p>ToR c) Develop a framework to cross-validate egg production and acoustic methods for the estimation of Spawning Stock Biomass and its distribution. Both egg production and acoustic methods allow estimation of Spawning Stock Biomass and stock distribution by using different assumptions and techniques. Cross-validation of these methods should be performed in a broad framework, allowing the comparison and validation of each method basic assumptions and identification of possible sources of discrepancy and its impact on the estimates. [Action Numbers 1.2; 1.11; 1.13].</p> <p>ToR d) Explore the possibilities of integrating egg production and acoustic-based Spawning Stock Biomass estimates. Building from the knowledge of differences and sources of uncertainty/bias in each of the methods, obtained in ToR c) above, WGACEGG will explore the possibility of using both methods to obtain an integrated estimate of SSB. [Action Number 1.11].</p> |

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| Scientific Justification and relation to Action Plan (continued) | <p>ToR e) Finalise new egg production procedures and associated software developed under SGSBSA. Both newly-developed DEPM and traditional egg production methods have been explored in SGSBSA, and associated robust and user-friendly software to perform egg production estimates is under development. WGACEGG will continue to support this attempt, by validation and testing of these methods, with the aim of producing a complete manual with associated software for performing such analysis. [Action Number 1.10]</p> <p>ToR f) Integrate biological/environmental information from surveys and additional sources to study the relationships between sardine and anchovy and the pelagic community in ICES areas VIII and IX. Information obtained from the spatial structure of the sardine and anchovy communities, together with associated environmental information would be integrated, with the scope of improving the understanding of the pelagic community, using both sardine and anchovy as key species of this community. [Action Numbers 1.2; 4.11].</p> |
| Resource Requirements: | None |
| Participants: | 15–20 |
| Secretariat Facilities: | None |
| Financial: | None |
| Linkages to Advisory Committees: | ACFM |
| Linkages to other Committees Groups: | WGMHSA, SGRESP |
| Linkages to other Organizations: | Other countries/institutions applying the DEPM, or carrying out integrated acoustic-egg surveys worldwide. |